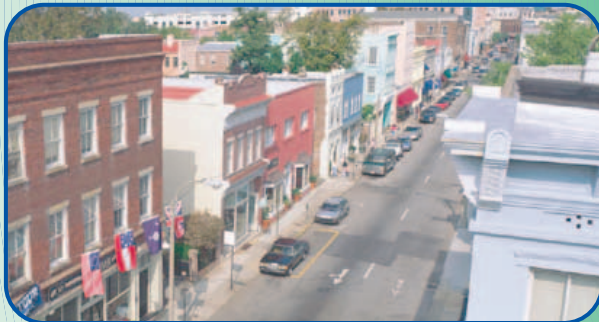




The goal of the Tennessee  
Main Street Program  
is to provide assistance  
to communities in order  
to establish the downtown  
and central business district  
as a vital component of  
economic development  
and job growth.



MAIN STREET



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## The Tennessee Main Street Program – Old buildings. New attitudes.

As part of the Community Development division of ECD, our staff hopes to provide technical assistance and expertise to communities across the state in the process of developing long-term strategies and techniques necessary to promote economic growth and development; to provide information and assistance in forging public-private partnerships; and to assist by coordinating networking and training opportunities for downtown commercial districts.



## Why are Main Streets important to your economic development strategies?

1. Your central business district is a prominent employment center
2. A downtown is a reflection of how a community sees itself and is perceived by others
3. Your downtown is the historic commercial/government core of your community
4. Downtown represents a vast amount of public and private investment in your community
5. Your downtown provides a sense of community and place
6. A revitalized downtown leads to increase in property taxes, sales tax and state employment
7. Successful revitalization efforts lead to increased traffic and provide a multiplier effect of investment outside the downtown district
8. A vibrant central business district is often a major tourist draw
9. A significant portion of your community's tax base comes from the downtown
10. Main Street is also a good incubator for new small businesses, which are the building blocks of a healthy economy.

## What is the Main Street approach to downtown commercial revitalization?

Main Street revitalization is a comprehensive, incremental, self-help economic strategy that focuses on developing public-private partnerships in order to enhance community livability and job creation while maintaining the historic character of the district. There are no quick fixes for declining downtowns. Success is realized through the Four-Point Approach of the National Main Street Center.

**Design** means getting Main Street into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets such as historic buildings and the traditional downtown layout is just part of the story. An inviting atmosphere can be created through window displays, parking areas, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping; good design conveys a visual message about what Main Street is and what it has to offer.

**Promotion** means selling the image and promise of Main Street to all prospects. By marketing the district's unique characteristics through advertising, retail promotional activities, special events, and marketing campaigns an effective promotion strategy forges a positive image to shoppers, investors, new businesses and visitors.

**Organization** means getting everyone working towards common goals. The common-sense formula of a volunteer-driven program and an organizational structure of board and committees assisting professional management can ease the difficult work of building consensus and cooperation among the varied groups that have a stake in the district.

**Economic Restructuring** means finding new or better purposes for Main Street enterprises. Helping existing downtown businesses expand and recruiting new ones, a successful Main Street converts unused space into productive property and sharpens the competitiveness of its businesses.

While the Main Street approach provides a template for successful revitalization, implementation of the approach is based on eight guiding principles:



**Comprehensive:** Commercial revitalization is complex and cannot be accomplished through a single, big-fix project.

**Incremental:** Local leaders must have the desire and will to make revitalization succeed.

**Public/Private Partnerships:** Both sectors have a vital interest in the economic health and physical viability of the district

**Identifying and building on existing assets:** Business districts must capitalize on the assets that make them unique

**Quality:** The quality of the organization and its programs reflects a sense of respect for and belief in the future of the commercial community

**Recognizes change:** Commercial districts are not static systems and revitalization efforts must accommodate change

**Implementation-oriented:** Activity creates confidence in the program and ever-greater levels of participation.

## Where should we go for information to get started?

You may call the Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development at (615) 741-1888 or visit the web site at [www.tn.gov](http://www.tn.gov) for more information or call the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Trust Main Street Center at (202) 588-6219.

